

## IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.121 as follows (see the accompanying "marked up" version pursuant to 1.121).

81 Sub 7  
1. (Four Times Amended) A water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen which comprises a thickener which is associative and swells in an alkaline medium, said thickener comprising a polymer having a carboxyl group and a hydrophobic group selected from the group consisting of a linear hydrocarbon, a non-aromatic cyclic hydrocarbon, an halogenated alkyl, an organosilicon group, and a fluorinated carbon group, a pigment, a polar solvent comprising water and other water-miscible solvents and a pH controlling agent.

82 Sub 7  
6. (Amended) The water based ink composition for a ballpoint pen of claim 1 wherein the hydrophobic group is a non-aromatic cyclic hydrocarbon.

## REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application, in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

### I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-9 are pending and at issue.

Claims 1 and 6 have been amended to remove the Markush group member "aromatic hydrocarbon," and to recite "non-aromatic cyclic hydrocarbon". Support for these amendments may be found at page 9, lines 14-18 of the specification as filed.